

# **Antwerp - Flanders - Belgium - Europe: ImPLI and the long way to go in court interpreting**

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**Keywords:**

Legal interpreting, interpreter-mediated questioning in pre-trial, fieldwork at the police station, awareness raising and training

**Research area:**

Legal interpreting

**Focus:**

Interpreter-mediated questioning in pre-trial

**Research methodology:**

Fieldwork observation – qualitative research through interviews

**Objectives:**

Enhance best practices in interpreter-mediated questioning in the pre-trial phase through solid training for all parties involved (legal actors, interpreters, policemen)

**Abstract:**

This paper will present an overview of the main results of the transnational ImPLI project (JUST/2010/JPEN/AG/1562) with a particular focus on the speakers' country (Belgium) and the way in which it prepares to implement the provisions of the Directive 2010/64/EU regarding the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings. The speakers will briefly highlight the existing training program for legal interpreters in Antwerp which is the result of a fruitful collaboration of many years between their interpreting institute, the police, magistrates and lawyers. More concretely, the speakers will illustrate how awareness is raised through training for interpreters, legal actors and police officers in the police academy.

However, in the second part, the results of fieldwork at the Antwerp Police (zone North) will show that this awareness raising still is an ongoing process. Semi-structured interviews revealed how the daily shop-floor workers manage to work with interpreters when interpreter mediated questioning is necessary. Due to organizational and financial reasons, policemen do not always turn to an interpreter to overcome linguistic difficulties. And when they do, recruiting is a fairly personal and arbitrary affair. Moreover, the "rules" taught during the interpreters' training are not always respected by the police (the seating arrangement in the room, the use of (in)direct speech, ethical issues etc.). This is because police officers are not always trained to work with interpreters, or are simply not aware of how an interpreter works or is supposed to act.

Finally, interviews with trainers at the police school learn us that there is hardly any room in the curriculum to deal with interpreter-mediated questioning. In our conclusion, we will formulate recommendations for training all the parties involved in interpreter-mediated questioning.

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